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## Krapp's Last Tape

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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**Peak Performances**

2015|2016 SEASON

**Robert Wilson**

*Krapp's Last Tape*

**by Samuel Beckett**



**March 17–20, 2016**  
**Alexander Kasser Theater**



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Photo by Lucie Jansch

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President  
Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts  
Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

# *Krapp's Last Tape*

**by Samuel Beckett**

Direction, Set Design, and Lighting Concept **Robert Wilson**

Costume Design and Set Design Collaboration **Yashi**

Lighting Design **A.J. Weissbard**

Sound Design **Peter Cerone** and **Jesse Ash**

## **Performed by Robert Wilson**

Associate Director **Sue Jane Stoker**

Assistant Director **Charles Chemin**

Technical Directors **Reinhard Bichsel** and **Marc Warren**

Light Supervisor **Aliberto Sagretti**

Sound Engineer **Guillaume Dulac**

Stage Manager **Thaiz Bozano**

Chief Stagehand **Corinna Gassauer**

Makeup **Claudia Bastia**

Robert Wilson's Personal Assistant **Owen Laub**

Tour Manager **Laura Artoni**

A project by Change Performing Arts.

Commissioned by Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, Spoleto52 Festival dei 2  
Mondi.

Produced by CRT Milano.

Duration: 70 minutes, no intermission.

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In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

## Program Notes

I was honored for one of my first plays, *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, that Samuel Beckett came backstage to see me. He complimented me on my fragmented non-sequential text. He said it was great. It was actually Eugene Ionesco who reviewed my first play, *Deafman Glance*. He said, "Wilson has gone further than Beckett." I was, then, very intimidated when I was actually meeting him.

I've always felt a kinship to Beckett's world. In some ways, it is too close to my work. But now, after 35 years, I've decided to meet the challenge and do it.

When I direct a work I create a structure in time. Finally, when all the visual elements are in place, I have created a frame for the performers to fill. If the structure is solid, then one can be free in it. Here, for the most part, the structure is given, and I must find my freedom within Beckett's structure. He tells you what the set looks like, what the movements are, etc. Everything is written down.

—Robert Wilson, Director

Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* is a solo/dialogue. One actor onstage carries on a conversation with his own voice recorded many years before. An old man sitting alone in his den on his birthday gets ready to make a recording about the past year of his life, as he has done on every birthday since he was a young man. Getting ready to make the new recording, he listens to a recording he made some 30 years before, at the end of a year that was perhaps the last truly happy one in his life.

Bitter, funny, ironic, he finds it hard to recognize himself in the brash, romantic, confident voice of his youth.

Robert Wilson not only directs and designs, but also performs the work, his first appearance as an actor since his *Hamlet: A Monologue* (last performed in 2000). The work provides a unique opportunity for his performing talent, being a blend of his signature highly detailed and rigorous integration of movement, lighting, and sound, and within that framework, a structure that leaves a great deal of freedom for the spontaneity of response that makes his live performance so exciting.

Wilson has often been compared with Beckett, both being masters of the stark simplicity that is one of the most difficult artistic achievements. Nothing is extraneous, not a word, not a movement. In the brief hour of this work, Beckett and Wilson, in a few simple strokes, paint a vision of the world that is very particular and, at the same time, universal.

—Sue Jane Stoker, Associate Director

## About the Artists

**Robert Wilson** (Director/Set Designer/Lighting Concept/Performer) has been called "...a towering figure in the world of experimental theater and an explorer in the uses of time and space on stage" by the *New York Times*.

Born in Waco, TX, Wilson is among the world's foremost theater and visual artists. His works for the stage unconventionally integrate a wide variety of

artistic media, including dance, movement, lighting, sculpture, music, and text. His images are aesthetically striking and emotionally charged, and his productions have earned the acclaim of audiences and critics worldwide.

After being educated at the University of Texas and Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, Wilson founded the New York-based performance collective The Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds in the mid-1960s and developed his first signature works, including *Deafman Glance* (1970) and *A Letter for Queen Victoria* (1974–75). With Philip Glass he wrote the seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976).

Wilson's artistic collaborators include many writers and musicians, such as Heiner Müller, Tom Waits, Susan Sontag, Laurie Anderson, William Burroughs, Lou Reed, and Jessye Norman. He has also left his imprint on masterworks such as Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Brecht/Weill's *Threepenny Opera*, Goethe's *Faust*, Jean de la Fontaine's *Fables*, and Homer's *Odyssey*.

Wilson's drawings, paintings, and sculptures have been presented around the world in hundreds of solo and group showings, and his works are held in private collections and museums throughout the world.

Wilson has been honored with numerous awards for excellence, including a Pulitzer Prize nomination, two Premio Ubu awards, the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale, and an Olivier Award. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters as well as the German Academy of the Arts. France pronounced him Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters (2003) and Officer of the Legion of Honor (2014); Germany awarded him the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit (2014).

Wilson is the founder and artistic director of The Watermill Center, a laboratory for the arts in Water Mill, NY.

**Yashi (Tabassomi)** (Costume Designer/Set Design Collaborator) studied costume and stage design at the Universität der Künste Berlin (University of Fine Arts) with Prof. Martin Rupprecht and Prof. Vivienne Westwood.

In 1999 she met the American director Robert Wilson during a stay at the Watermill Center in Long Island. Since then she has been working in Robert Wilson's team as a costume designer in collaboration with costume designers Jacques Reynaud and Moidele Bickel in successful international productions such as *White Raven* (New York), *Woyzeck* (Copenhagen), *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Paris) and *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Berlin). She finished her studies in summer 2000 with the stage and costume design for the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* directed by Jörn Weisbrodt. Since 2000 she has been working as a freelance costume and stage designer for theater, opera, and film. In 2009, she received the Hein Heckroth Stage Design Prize for Young Artists. For Robert Wilson, she designed costumes for *Rumi: In the Blink of the Eye* (Athens) and *Krapp's Last Tape* at the Spoleto Festival in 2009, with Robert Wilson performing the lead role. She has worked with various directors such as Daniel Schmid, Hans Neuenfels, Adriana Altaras, and Ulrich Rasche.

**A.J. Weissbard** (Lighting Designer) is an American lighting designer and artist who has worked worldwide designing for theater, video, exhibition, permanent architectural installation, special events, and fashion. His collaborations include projects with Robert Wilson, Peter Stein, Luca Ronconi, Daniele Abbado, Marina Abramović, Bernard Sobel, Peter Greenaway, William Kentridge, David Cronenberg, Andriy Zholdak, Shirin Neshat, Gae Aulenti, Fabio Novembre, Pierluigi Cerri, Richard Gluckman, Matteo Thun, Giorgio Armani, Hugo Boss, and the Martha Graham Dance Company.

His work has been seen in major opera houses, festivals, theaters, and other sites in more than 40 countries, including Lincoln Center (New York), Los Angeles Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Opera Garnier (Paris), Opera La Monnaie (Brussels), Teatro Real (Madrid), Epidauros ancient theater, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Esplanade (Singapore), Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, Teatro Municipal São Paulo, Royal Opera House Muscat, Guggenheim New York/Bilbao, Royal Academy of London, Petit Palais (Paris), Vitra Design Museum, Milan Triennale, Quirinale of Rome, Kunstindustrimuseet Copenhagen, Shanghai Art Museum, Aichi World Expo 2005, Milan Salone del Mobile, Venice Biennale, and the Louvre.

Weissbard was recently awarded the 2014 Golden Mask for best lighting design for musical theater and the first IFSArts award for Lighting Design. He is based in Italy and teaches design in universities around the world.

**Peter Cerone** (Sound Designer) has designed and engineered sound for theater and installations since 1980. He began his career in Rome, working for 10 years at the National Theatre of Rome (Teatro Argentino). There he worked with directors such as Maurizio Scaparro, Luca Ronconi, and Federico Tiezzi. Cerone began working for Robert Wilson in 1992 and continues to collaborate on new projects. Since returning to Montreal in 2000, Cerone has continued working internationally and started collaborations with Canadian artists. He has also worked with the Centaur Theatre since 2001 and Concordia University since 2009.

**Jesse Ash** (Sound Designer), a sound designer, engineer, and musician based in Montreal, has been working with sound since his early teens and making electronic and more traditional music even longer. With over 75 designs and compositions for stage, film, and installations, his work has been heard across Canada as well as in the US and internationally. In 2009 Ash was invited to work with Robert Wilson to help realize the sound design for *Krapp's Last Tape* and was later invited to create the sound for Wilson's exhibition *Mind Gap* in Oslo. Recent work has seen a focus on composition and the development of autonomous and interactive playback devices for use in installations and exhibitions. Ash has been a guest lecturer at several schools and universities and has taught at the National Theatre School of Canada since 2009.

## Change Performing Arts

Change Performing Arts, production company of *Krapp's Last Tape*, is an independent production company based in Milan and active worldwide in the fields of live performance, including theater, dance, opera, traditional performing arts, and classical and contemporary music; and in the visual arts, including installations, exhibitions, and cultural events. Today, with a permanent staff of arts producers and designers—under the artistic



direction of Franco Laera and Elisabetta di Mambro, with Franco Gabualdi as operation director—the company manages every step of artistic projects from the concept to the staging and the international production.

Constantly devoting its efforts to creating new relationships with established and young artists, the company explores and encourages the way the various arts forms can be combined to create new and original means of expression in realizing provocative events of the highest quality. With its ongoing commitment to artists such as Lev Dodin, Philip Glass, Peter Greenaway, Shirin Neshat, Peter Stein, Robert Wilson, Tim Yip, and many others, the company has in fact developed a specific strategy to produce art works, theater productions and events internationally working closely with the artists, established arts institutions, and selected corporate partners.

Since the commission and production of the installation *Memory/Loss* by Robert Wilson winning the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion in 1993, Change Performing Arts has specialized in combining visual art and performance, designing and producing further exhibitions and art events like *Rooms & Secrets* and *Imagining Prometheus*; the projects for the Biennial of Valencia in 2001; the official daily show of the World Expo Aichi in Japan in 2005; the exhibition Giorgio Armani in collaboration with the Guggenheim Museum; the multimedia installation *Leonardo's Last Supper* by Peter Greenaway in Milan (2008), successfully presented also in Melbourne (2009) and at the Park Avenue Armory in New York (2010); *The Wedding at Cana* by Paolo Veronese on the San Giorgio Maggiore Island in Venice as part of the monumental work *Nine Classical Paintings Revisited*; and *Living Rooms* by Robert Wilson at the Louvre Museum in Paris (2013).

The company is also producing films and documentaries such as *The Marriage* directed by Peter Greenaway and presented at the 66th Venice International Film Festival in September 2009 as well as engaging in the in the research and development of new technologies such as the ones recently used for the multimedia artwork *Italy of the Cities* for the Shanghai World Expo 2010. Concurrent with the exploration of new media and technologies, Change Performing Arts continues the production and distribution of theater works created in association with the leading directors of the international scene.

# The Watermill Center

The Watermill Center is a laboratory for performance founded by Robert Wilson as a unique environment for young and emerging artists from around the world to explore new ideas. Watermill draws inspiration from all the arts and cultures as well as from social, human, and natural sciences. Watermill is a global community of artists where living and working together among the extensive collection of art and artifacts lies at the heart of the experience. Watermill strives to be a haven for a next generation of artists while supporting their work among a network of international institutions that embrace new interdisciplinary approaches.

Many of the world's most celebrated artists have participated in Watermill programs, including Trisha Brown, David Byrne, Lucinda Childs, Philip Glass, Isabelle Huppert, Jeanne Moreau, Lou Reed, Miranda Richardson, Dominique Sanda, Susan Sontag, and Robert Wilson himself. Theaters and museums around the world have mounted dozens of projects that were originally developed at the Watermill Center. In the words of Jessye Norman, "Watermill is the best idea to find a place in the world of arts since Pierre Boulez created IRCAM in Paris. Robert Wilson's unique gifts and spirit provide the strong basis of a new vision of the creation and presentation of all that we think of as theater in particular, combining all of the arts in a fresh perspective."

The Byrd Hoffman Water Mill Foundation operates the Center and coordinates its artistic programs. In addition, the Center has established collaborative networks with both neighboring and international cultural and educational institutions. Its artistic programs are financed through the generous support of individuals, foundations, corporations, and state institutions.

The Watermill Center's new facilities were inaugurated in July 2006. Since the grand opening, the Watermill Center has offered a wide range of programs and activities throughout the year. For the well-known International Summer Arts Program, Wilson invites 60–80 artists who come

from over 25 countries—48 countries so far—for 4–5 weeks of intense creative exploration. There are daily workshops with Mr. Wilson and his collaborators, based on new projects they are developing in all areas of the arts. Residents also develop their own work under Wilson’s guidance. A lecture series completes the ambitious program. Its mission is to give young emerging artists time and space to create new original works in all artistic fields and related disciplines and to offer them a network of associated institutions, artists, and alumni to support them in their artistic and professional development.

For the Center’s Fall and Spring Residency programs, which take place from September to June, a high-profile committee of practitioners in the arts and humanities—including Wilson, Marina Abramović, Alanna Heiss, Albert Maysles, Gerard Mortier, John Rockwell, Jonathan Safran Foer, Richard Sennett, Nike Wagner, and others—selects over 15 groups, individual artists and scholars in residence to workshop their own creations. The residencies are complemented by educational programs with schools and other institutions; public events such as open rehearsals and lectures, seminars, and symposia; and tours of the building and grounds.

The London-based performance and video artist Daria Martin writes about her Watermill experience: “We are encouraged to use the space as we see fit, whenever suits us.... We also enjoyed the freedom of wandering through Robert Wilson’s incredible collection of objects, unhindered by protective glass etc.—these statues add a provocative texture to thoughts and to work.... The peace and tranquility here is gold dust. You can watch your own thoughts drift past like in a meditation....”

[www.watermillcenter.org](http://www.watermillcenter.org).

## Acknowledgments

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**Office of Arts & Cultural Programming** (ACP) presents and produces remarkable works of dance, music, theater, and opera at the Alexander Kasser Theater under the banner Peak Performances. Specific to its mission is a willingness to offer work by artists whose ideas are singular and worthy examples of creative innovation. Notable past productions include Richard Schechner's *Imagining O*; Robert Woodruff's *Dog Days* by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek; Robert Wilson's *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter* by Bernice Johnson Reagon, Toshi Reagon, and Jacqueline Woodson; David Gordon's *Shlemiel the First* by Robert Brustein, Arnold Weinstein, and Hankus Netsky; Ridge Theater's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field* by David Lang; and The Builders Association's *Elements of Oz*. ACP has commissioned works by Vijay Iyer, Liz Gerring, Bill T. Jones, Susan Marshall, Jan Fabre, Richard Alston, Liz Lerman, Wayne McGregor,

Laurie Anderson (for the Kronos Quartet), Romeo Castellucci, Pat Graney, Fred Hersch, and Nora Chipaumire. ACP has fostered several unique initiatives, such as the Creative Thinking course, which takes the artistic process as impetus for problem solving in all academic disciplines, and Dance for Film on Location at MSU, a multiyear project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

ACP is the proud recipient of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance/New Jersey State Council on the Arts Cultural Access Network Innovator Award and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts Citation of Excellence and Designation of Major Impact.

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